

Can Meditation Positively Impact Your teenager? It Absolutely Can!

A teenager's life is full of stressful decisions and difficult emotions. Meditation is known to reduce conditions that start in adolescence, including anxiety, depression, and stress. Meditation is the purposeful focusing of the mind, which trains your mind to your mind to slow down, relax, and stay positive. Meditating for just a few minutes a day can help your teen feel centered, balanced, and more in control — even during the times when they are not meditating. Studies show that effect of meditation on symptoms of anxiety and depression was exactly the same as the effect of antidepressants. When your teen makes meditation their daily routines, it may help them feel more grounded when it seems like they are being pulled in a million directions.

Don't have a teen yet? Meditation can be introduced at any age. It is never too early to have your child start meditating!

Meditation Sounds Great! But How Do I Get My Teen to Start?

Lead by example. It's hard to convince adolescents of the benefits of a mindfulness practice without modeling it yourself. When you meditate, you will be able to demonstrate your ability to manage stress and respond, not react, to setbacks. If you want your teen to take mindfulness seriously, they need to see it in action. Additionally, you can turn meditation into something that you and your child can do together!

Teach your child about his/her mind. Explain to them that when they practice mindfulness, they will learn that much of the chatter of the mind is just that: chatter. It's not reality; it's worry, it's anxiety, it's baseless projection. Mindfulness teaches teenagers to recognize the downward spiral of thoughts before it gets out of hand, perhaps learning to label it as simply "worrying." Explain to them a benefit of meditation will be to acknowledge the anxiety without getting caught up in it, without it leading to the rumination that ultimately ruins their mood.

One other way to get teens to meditate is by sharing the benefits of meditating with them. Share facts with them such as:

- Meditation can help boost test scores. That means bumping up their grades or SAT score.
- It leads to building stronger connections with peers.
- It improves concentration providing a longer attention span.
- It improves your memory, attitude, and athletic performance.
- Meditation reduces stress, anxiety, and depression.

How to Meditate:

Does meditating seem daunting to you? It shouldn't-because there is no wrong way to meditate. Start with the basics. Find a time where meditation will work in your schedule. Choose a time of day where you will be most. Find a quiet area in your house that you will have the least distractions and there is not a lot of noise. You can sit in a comfortable seated position or you can lie down (just don't fall asleep!). Close your eyes, focus on your breath, and relax. Focus on breathing air through your nose, filling your lungs, and expelling the air from you nose. Start off by meditating for 3-5 minutes at a time. When you become more comfortable with meditation, then you can increase your meditation time intervals.

If this still feels intimidating to you, try guided meditation.

What is guided meditation?

Guided Meditation is a process by which one or more participants meditate in response to the guidance provided by a trained practitioner or teacher, either in person or via a written text, sound recording, video, or audiovisual media. It can be comprised of music or verbal instruction, or a combination of both. Here links to some [guided mediation apps](#) and [free web-based guided meditations](#).

Meditation is a simple tool, which can increase your teen's quality of life dramatically. It delivers multiple advantages that your teen will benefit from. By becoming more mindful, your teen will learn to navigate through daily scenarios that may lead to stress, depression, and anxiety. Your teen will learn to become more self-aware, which will lead to building stronger connections with friends and family. Also, with meditation, your teen's concentration may improve, which may lead to a higher academic success.

Talk to your teen about meditation today!

Taking Action

Guided meditation apps your teen might enjoy:

- [**Insight Meditation Timer**](#). This app is great if you are new to meditation. It offers introductory guided meditations and a supportive community to help you get started. Experienced meditators will feel right at home with beautiful Tibetan singing bowls and guided meditations by experienced teachers.
- [**Stop, Breathe, and Think**](#). This it opens with a short questionnaire where the users several questions specific to their mood, emotions, and physicality. The app recommends guided meditations for their current state.
- [**Smiling Mind**](#). Designed for is designed specifically for adolescent use. Smiling Mind is meditation made easy. Smiling Mind is a unique web and App-based program developed by a team of psychologists with expertise in youth and

adolescent therapy, Mindfulness Meditation and web-based wellness programs. Guided Meditations are categorized for ages ranging from “bite size” to adult.

- **Take a Break!** Not necessarily just for teens, but this provides short guided meditations for stress relief. Young people just starting out with meditation may prefer guidance. Listeners will be able to enjoy the deep relaxation, stress relief and benefits of meditation now with this app by Meditation Oasis.

Free web-based guided meditations:

<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

http://www.centerformindfullearning.org/category/guided-meditations/?gclid=CMHL1_mKmskCFdcYgQodJvEFgg

<http://mindfulnessforteens.com/guided-meditations/>

Tips on How to Meditate:

- Choose a time of day where distractions will be limited.
- Turn off your phone. Better yet, leave it in other room, turned off.
- Find a quiet place where you can sit without being disturbed. Try to always meditate in the same place.
- Close your eyes, it's easiest to meditate without a lot of external distraction. Sitting in the same spot helps you become committed to your meditation setting.
- During meditation, stick with a natural breath, but remember that it can be helpful from time to time to mindfully soften, deepen, or elongate your breath.
- Start small with five minutes of meditation each day. Just as you would need to build up your endurance to run for long distances, you need to train yourself to meditate. Over time, try working your way up to 20-40 minutes by increase your time in small increments until you reach a length of time that feels right to you and works with your lifestyle.

Resources

For more meditation techniques, please visit:

<http://everydaylife.globalpost.com/meditation-techniques-teens-14782.html>

Mindfulnessforteens.com is a website for teens on how to become more mindful. It provides guidance on how to incorporate mindfulness and meditation into their everyday lives.

<http://mindfulnessforteens.com/>

Inward Bound Mindfulness Education (iBme) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of teens, parents, and professionals. Through mindfulness retreats, iBme helps participants cultivate awareness, compassion, and kindness for themselves, others, and the natural world.

<http://ibme.info/retreats/teens/>

References

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- Roeser, R.W. & Pinela, C. (2014). Mindfulness and compassion training in adolescence: A developmental contemplative science perspective. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 142, pp. 9-30, ISSN: 15338916.'
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